COMMENTS ON THE REDISCOVERY AND DISTRIBUTION OF *CUNILA ORIGANOIDES* (LAMIACEAE) IN TEXAS

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ABSTRACT

Cunila origanoides has been rediscovered in Texas based on recent herbarium and field studies.

RESUMEN

Cunila origanoides ha sido redescubierta en Texas mediante estudios recientes de herbario y campo.

Herbarium and field studies on the Texas flora have yielded the following records pertaining to the occurrence and distribution of *Cunila origanoides* within the state.

Cunila origanoides (L.) Britt. (Lamiaceae)—Small (1933), Cory and Parks (1937), Correll and Johnston (1970), Hatch et al. (1990), and Jones et al. (1997) attributed this species to Texas. Correll and Johnston (1970) cited the distribution as north central Texas, while Hatch et al. (1990) gave the distribution as the Post Oak Savannah, Blackland Prairies, and Cross Timbers and Prairies vegetational areas. The latter mentioned distribution was cited by Diggs et al. (1999) who included *Cunila* in the Flora of North Central Texas. Gould (1962, 1969) and Turner et al. (2003) did not include the species in their respective works. The exclusion from the latter work seems to have effectively removed *Cunila* from being known as a part of the state's flora. Most likely, the ambiguity in the literature is a consequence of no cited voucher specimen. Recently, we have uncovered the two specimens cited below, thus are able to resolve the matter.

Specimens examined. **Kaufman Co.**: vicinity of Terrell, 6 Sep 1904, *Tyler s.n.* (BAYLU (photo), US). **Lamar Co.**: 1.4 mi E of jct of St. Rt. 906 and Hwy 271 at Midcity on St. Rt. 906, slope forest below Pat Mayse Lake Dam, 18 Oct 2002, *Singhurst & Harris 11344* (BAYLU).

It may be assumed that Small (1933) had reference to a specimen, thus its inclusion in his manual, but under the genus *Mappia* House. The Kaufman County specimen was annotated by Donovan S. Correll in 1967, hence its inclusion in Correll and Johnston (1970). However, neither the Small (1933) nor Correll and Johnston (1970) reports give precise location data or indicate the source of their information. The other literature citations concerning the occurrence of the species in Texas seem to have originated from these two reports. Without loca-

tion data at least to county, it is understandable, and certainly correct, for Turner et al. (2003) to not include the species in the *Atlas of the Vascular Plants of Texas.*

Cunila is a New World genus of about 15 species native from eastern North America to Uruguay (Diggs et al. 1999). *Cunila origanoides* is a native to eastern North America that is distributed from New York, south to Georgia, west to Kansas and Texas (USDA, NRCS 2004). The occurrence of *C. origanoides* in Texas is very significant. In eastern Texas, calcareous disjuncts, such as *C. origanoides*, have been receding in distribution and are evidence of calciphile relics of an earlier cooler climate (Kral 1963). The real significance of the occurrence of *C. origanoides* is in the disjunct nature of the sites. It is not known what the 1904 location of *C. origanoides* in Kaufman County was like and whether such habitat still exists there. There are still a few remnant hardwood sites, such as Cedar Creek Island (the big island) in Cedar Creek Lake, in Kaufman County that contain old growth oak stands with eastern taxa like *Carollorhiza wisteriana*, *Erythronium albidum*, *Phryma leptostachya* and *Verbesina helianthoides*. In Lamar County, *C. origanoides* occurs in rich hardwoods on slopes along a spring fed creek where the Woodbine and Eagleford shale formations merge. This is cretaceous geology, which is of rather restricted occurrence in northeast Texas. It does, however, support other disjunct and peripheral species such as the rare [in Texas] *Prenanthes barbata* and the more eastern *Heuchera americana*. Therefore, the presence of *C. origanoides* in northeast Texas is significant as this native species is persisting in remnant mature hardwood habitat. This habitat type is dwindling from land use practices and the resulting fragmentation. Potential habitat for *C. origanoides* also occurs in Fannin, Hunt, Delta, Hopkins, Franklin, Titus, Red River, and Bowie counties. This information is valuable as an indicator of calcareous slope hardwood forests that may contain other peripheral and disjunct taxa and its discovery aids the understanding regional plant communities and their floristic make-up.

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